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ART. I. — *Histoire de la Louisiane.* Par CHARLES GAY-ARRÉ. Nouvelle-Orléans. Imprimé par Magne et Weisse. 1847. 2 vols. 8vo.

REPUBLICAN institutions seem to have great power in fusing together and assimilating to each other the most heterogeneous elements of national character. Nearly all the nations of Europe have furnished their quota for making up the population of the United States, so that if each stock had preserved its original characteristics, the aggregate of the inhabitants of this country would have resembled the conglomerate or pudding-stone formation in geology, in which angular and rounded pebbles, with every variety of size, shape, and internal composition, are merely held together by a rocky cement,—united by juxtaposition, but by no chemical affinities. A monarchical government, which has extended its dominions by conquest, and holds the greater portion of them merely by the sword, causes only this imperfect and unnatural union among the several classes of its subjects ;— the mortar which binds them may be more or less indurated, according to its degree of native strength, or to the lapse of time during which it has been exposed to the action of elemental forces ; but the pebbles imbedded in it continue unchanged ; their form remains as it was determined by mutual attrition, when they were free to roll over each other under the impulse of the waves and the resistance of the beach. But political freedom acts like a common solvent in chemistry ; the powerful acid takes up the most refractory and dissimilar

bases, and converts them into neutral salts. The particles, as in a state of comminution or perfect solvency, are free to act on each other, and the beautiful laws of affinity come into play, forming compounds in which no trace of the original character of the ingredients can be discerned. The action is not always immediate, it is true ; some time may be necessary to allow the solution to be completed and the new crystallizations to take place. But when the process is ended, the change of qualities is complete ; it is nature's handiwork contrasted with the imperfect joinery and forced combinations effected by human art, when man attempts to violate or overrule the laws of God.

The history and present condition of Belgium, Italy, Poland, and other countries in Europe which have long been subject to the dominion of foreigners, show how difficult it is to amalgamate two races into one, when they are brought together only by an external force, and are both subject to arbitrary rule. A principle of mutual repulsion exists between the conquerors and the enslaved, the effects of which are continued to distant generations. After the exasperated feelings caused by the original subjugation of the country have subsided, their place is supplied by the distinctions of caste founded upon the same event, which are still more capable than the former of perpetuating the disunion. The miseries of Ireland at the present time may be attributed in great part to the entire separation from each other of the two races by which it is inhabited ; the Erse and the Anglo-Saxon blood will never mingle in the country where they were first brought together ; mutual and continued irritation is the only consequence of holding them in contact. The forcible measure of a legislative union of the two nations did not create the difficulty ; a repeal of that union will not remove it. The disorder is wholly internal ; the Irish serf quarrels with his English landlord, and not with the English government, which is a better one than he would probably frame for himself. Yet the descendants of these two hostile nations live harmoniously by each other's side in our own land, and but few generations elapse before they look back upon a common ancestry.

Crossing the breed promotes the excellence of the stock of domestic animals. There is no reason why the same law of nature should not hold good with respect to man, and

the experiment which will establish it is certainly going on upon a large scale in the United States. The descendants of the Dutch in New York, the Germans in Pennsylvania and Ohio, the Spaniards in Florida, and the French in Louisiana, are rapidly amalgamating with the English, who have established themselves in overwhelming numbers in every corner of the land. The process is more or less complete according to the length of time since it commenced. In the instance first named, it is nearly finished, for the Dutch and the English have been intermarrying for two centuries, and both have consequently given way in a great degree to what may be called the native New York breed. In Louisiana it is hardly begun, for little more than one generation has passed away since the country was freed from Transatlantic rule, and annexed, as the phrase now goes, to the "area of freedom." But how much more rapidly are the two currents of human life there already flowing into one than in the similar case of Canada, though the opportunity for union was open in the latter case half a century earlier than in the former! To judge from present appearances, Louisiana will have a homogeneous population, excepting the blacks, long before the mutual jealousy of the two races on the St. Lawrence will so far have died out as to allow the transfusion of blood even to begin.

These remarks have been suggested by a review of the colonial history of Louisiana, to which we were directed by the publication of M. Gayarré's work. His volumes are written in French, and embody some valuable documents, now first published, which throw light on the curious vicissitudes of fortune that this colony underwent in the course of the eighteenth century. It appears from the Preface, that M. Magne, one of the editors of the *New Orleans Bee*, made a careful examination, while at Paris, of the papers of the marine department of France, and selected from them all which related to the history of Louisiana. These documents were carefully transcribed, and the copies were subsequently purchased by Governor Mouton, in behalf of the State, and deposited in the government archives. They include all the original reports and despatches sent by the authorities of Louisiana to the home government during the whole period of the French dominion in the colony. The letters of Bienville, D'Artaguet, Vaudreuil, and others,

who had an active share in the early administration of Louisiana, are interesting and valuable when combined with other materials of history ; but they contain many repetitions, crinations, and profitless disputes, and, when taken alone, they furnish but a meagre record of the progress of affairs. M. Gayarré seems to have published them almost entire, with no principle of selection or abridgment, and to have made but little use of the earlier historians, Du Pratz and Dumont, who wrote from personal experience and observation, and whose works, therefore, are quite as trustworthy as the one-sided reports of selfish and disappointed officials. The volumes now before us are of oppressive dimensions, and might with more propriety be considered as a collection of state papers and other historical materials, than as a finished history. Several documents of considerable length, like the earliest *Code Noir* of Louisiana, have no right to be incorporated into the text of such a book, though they might have found a place in the Appendix. The author is now Secretary of State for Louisiana, and he appears to have drawn the materials of his book almost at random from the shelves of his office. He promises, however, to rewrite the history in English, with great curtailments, and to cast the materials into an entirely new mould. We commend him for this judicious design, and hope it will be executed with diligence and a careful study of the earlier writers upon the same topic.

Frenchmen have been more fortunate generally in the career of exploration and discovery than in their attempts at permanent colonization. Brave, enterprising, and hardy, fond of adventure and quick in the command of their resources, they have been excellent pioneers for the more slow and stubborn race who came after them, both in Canada and the valley of the Mississippi, and who by superior industry and patience have robbed them of the fairest fruits of their labors. In their intercourse with savage nations, they have uniformly shown great tact, and have been eminently successful. Their missionaries have been more fortunate than those of any other nation in planting the cross among the Indian tribes of this continent, though perhaps without establishing much Christianity along with it. The influence which the Jesuit and Recollect missionaries so fairly acquired over their wild converts was skilfully turned by the

French governors to political purposes, and in all their contests with the English for the possession of Canada and the Western territory, the Indians were their faithful and efficient allies. But many of the early French colonists, instead of contributing to the civilization of the red men, were led to adopt their habits, and to introduce among them only the peculiar vices of the whites. The *coureurs de bois* and the *voyageurs* were often hardly distinguishable from the native children of the woods among whom they spent most of their lives. Their more sober countrymen formed settlements in the wilderness, and labored to introduce the arts and comforts of civilized life, and to lay the foundations of a permanent colony. But they were generally careless, indolent, and unambitious ; they preferred meagre fare and insufficient accommodations to the incessant toil which was necessary to procure a more generous subsistence. The settlement continued, but did not flourish. The forest did not fall, the earth did not bring forth its harvests, with that magical celerity which rewarded the more patient efforts of the hardy English emigrant. The infant colony had but a precarious existence, though carefully nursed by the ambitious policy of the home government, and often recruited by fresh bands of adventurers from France.

The early history of Louisiana affords a striking contrast with the rapid progress, under far more unfavorable circumstances, of the primitive settlements in New England. The lower region of the Mississippi valley seems a paradise of natural advantages, in comparison with the inclement sky, the rock-bound shores, and the thin and stony soil of Plymouth and Massachusetts. In view of the sunny climate and luxuriant vegetation of the former place, it seems hardly credible that the early settlers of it should have suffered for many years from famine, or that they were preserved from it only by continued and gratuitous supplies of food from France and the West Indies. But the management of the colony was a blunder from beginning to end. It originated in ideas of political advantage and commercial speculation. The favor of the home government was extended towards it to an almost unlimited extent ; the colony nearly perished, not from inattention or hostility, but from unskilful nursing. Money was lavished upon it, at first from the royal treasury, then from the coffers of the most opulent merchant in France ;

and when he was made nearly bankrupt by the expenditure, the funds of a gigantic financial association, prodigal in the use of its almost unbounded means, were brought to the rescue. And yet, more than twenty years after the colony was founded, Du Pratz, an eyewitness, speaking of the principal settlement at Biloxi, says that the famine there was so great, "that more than five hundred people died of hunger." He adds, — "The great plenty of oysters found upon the coast saved the lives of some, though they were obliged to wade almost up to their thighs for them, a gunshot from the shore."

"It is inconceivable," says M. Gayarré, "that the colony, after twenty-four years' existence upon a soil as fertile as that of Louisiana, should have been reduced, in 1723, to such a degree of misery and famine, that the chief council thought itself obliged to inform the French government, by a despatch of the 24th of January, that 'the inhabitants absolutely cannot subsist, if the company do not send hither by every vessel some salt provisions.' It is evident that the infancy of this unhappy colony was but a prolonged agony; the principle of life seemed to be wanting to it." — Vol. I. p. 195.

At the time of which our author here writes, the seat of government had just been transferred to New Orleans, which then contained about a hundred huts, and somewhat more than two hundred inhabitants. And this city is now one of the great provision-markets of the world! In 1723, its population were prevented from starving by supplies received from France; in 1847, a considerable portion of famishing Europe is fed from its abundance.

The first chapter of M. Gayarré's work is devoted to the apocryphal story of Hernando de Soto's overland expedition to the lower Mississippi, which he discovered in 1541, of his death the following year, and of a remnant of his followers descending the river to its mouth, and thence returning along the shores of the Gulf in safety to Mexico. All this is a romantic and interesting tale; but for how large a portion of it we are indebted only to the vivid fancy of the Spanish historian, it is impossible to say; exaggerations and imaginative details may easily be detected in it by internal evidence. Spain made no attempt to take possession of the country to which this expedition, if real, had given it a valid claim, nor did any of its subjects venture to follow

the track of De Soto's discoveries. More than a hundred and thirty years afterwards, the voyages of Joliet and Marquette first revealed with certainty the existence and direction of the great Western river, which seems, up to their time, to have been known to Europeans only through the vague reports of the Indians. In 1682, the heroic La Salle actually sailed down the whole length of the stream, from the Illinois country, and at its opening into the Gulf of Mexico, challenging to himself the honors of undoubted first discovery, took formal possession of the country on both banks in the name of his sovereign, and called it Louisiana. The vanity of the *Grand Monarque* was flattered by this event, and as he was then still in the heyday of a successful reign, his ambition slumbered not till measures were taken for following up discovery by colonization, and making an immense addition to the foreign possessions of France.

Here was the original fault in the scheme of the Louisiana colony, and the cause of its subsequent feebleness and languid growth. Its establishment was a mere freak of vanity on the part of the grandiloquent Louis the Fourteenth, who was always quite as much puffed up in his own conceit as was seemly for a great king. He essayed by the mere force of his royal will to create for France a colonial dominion on the banks of the great Father of Waters, which should rival or eclipse the flourishing colonies of England on the Atlantic coast, that had been established for her, in their penury and homelessness, by the hard hands and stout hearts of her political and religious exiles. But a great colony cannot be improvised like a copy of verses. Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay were settled by the grace of God, and by the determination of English Puritanism; and the infant establishments grew vigorously to man's estate, amid all the hardships and perils of that wilderness home. Louisiana was colonized at the gracious pleasure and under the special favor and protection of "the very high, very powerful, very invincible and victorious prince, Louis the Great, king of France and Navarre, the fourteenth of that name"; and it was a sickly bantling from its birth, hardly worth the trouble of nursing. It was colonized by involuntary emigrants, sent thither in ships of war, under a military guard, or by those who had been lured from their homes under deceptive representations of the profitable traffic that might be held with the

Indians and Spaniards, or of the gold and silver mines to be found on the banks of the Mississippi. However induced to come to the promised El Dorado, they found it no easy matter, after their expectations had been disappointed, to return to their native land. The governor of the colony, nine years after its establishment, wrote to the minister of marine affairs in France, — “I have ordered a watch to be kept over several inhabitants of La Rochelle, who have formed a design of leaving the country. They are persons who have become rich by keeping drinking-shops. Consequently, it seems to me just to oblige them to remain here.” It was a poor mode, as M. Gayarré remarks, of attracting colonists thither, to proclaim to the world that Louisiana was a prison, the doors of which were closed upon all who entered, and were opened only with great difficulty for those who desired to get out.

On his return to France, after his grand discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi, La Salle was received with well merited honors. He was caressed and flattered at court, and his eloquent recital of his adventures, with glowing descriptions of the yet unappropriated region of the New World that he had just visited, kindled the excitable imaginations of the French, and raised glorious visions of an indefinite increase of their colonial dominions. The king ordered his ministers to fit out immediately at La Rochelle a naval expedition, provided with all the necessary tools and supplies, to transport a troop of French emigrants to Louisiana, under the command of La Salle. The fleet was composed of four vessels, one of which was a frigate, the command of the naval part of the enterprise being given to the Chevalier de Beaujeu. Twelve young men of good families went on board as volunteers. A company of fifty soldiers was added by the government, and a liberal offer of money, provisions, and farming tools induced a small number of agriculturists with their families to join the expedition. Laborers also were hired to expatriate themselves, and five priests, one of whom was a brother of La Salle, were to minister to the spiritual wants of the new colony. The fleet left France on the 4th of July, 1684, and was steered towards St. Domingo, where it arrived after a tempestuous voyage, and with the loss of one of the vessels, which was captured by a Spanish privateer.

We need not repeat here a story so well known as that of the unhappy end of this enterprise, and the assassination of its heroic leader. If he had succeeded in finding again the mouth of the Mississippi, and entering it with his ships, so as to meet his old companion, the veteran Tonti, who had descended the river from the Illinois country to join him, he would probably have found an eligible position for the new colony, and under his skilful and energetic guidance, it might have flourished from the outset. But it was ordered otherwise, and the attempt to colonize Louisiana was not soon renewed. He perished in the brave attempt to reach the Illinois by an overland journey, and the body of the emigrants, whom he had left behind at Fort St. Louis, on the coast of Texas, receiving no succour from France, and having exhausted their supplies, were not long able to resist the Indians, by whom they were all massacred. As a great part of this unfortunate band was composed of soldiers and hired laborers, it is evident that the number of those who left France of their own accord, with a view of finding a permanent home in the newly discovered region, must have been very small. There were few temptations then for the French to emigrate; satisfied with their own beautiful land, indolent and careless, few would volunteer for so hazardous an enterprise as that of colonizing the swamps and forests in the interior of America. If the project had been started some years earlier, while the persecution of the Huguenots was going on, particularly at the time that the edict of Nantes was revoked, the ships might have been crowded with voluntary emigrants.

After the failure of La Salle's expedition, as Louis the Fourteenth was at war with half the powers of Europe, he had no leisure to think of the projected colony, and the plan seemed to be given up. After the peace of Ryswick, however, a French officer named Iberville, who had gained much distinction in the war with England, made a proposition to the ministry to renew the trial, and his offer was accepted. The opportunity was a favorable one, for the peace had caused some regiments to be disbanded in which a number of Canadians were enrolled, who had come over to join in the European war, and were now ready to return to any part of America. Including these, with the women and children, about two hundred persons were collected to form the nucleus

of the new establishment. Four vessels, two of which were frigates of thirty guns each, were fitted out for the undertaking, and at St. Domingo another large man-of-war joined the fleet. They arrived at Pensacola in January, 1699, and the Spanish governor of that place not being willing to admit so powerful a squadron into the harbour, they made sail again to the southwest till they reached the Chandeleur islands, where the vessels anchored. Some of the emigrants landed, and constructed huts on the shore, where they were kindly received by the Indians, who belonged to the Biloxi tribe.

The first object was to discover the mouth of the Mississippi, and as Father Anastasius was with them, who had accompanied La Salle in his memorable voyage down the river, and was with him also at his death, there was good hope that the search would be successful. Taking this father as a guide, Iberville embarked with a small party in a boat, and attended by his youngest brother, Bienville, who had charge of a second boat, set off to explore the coast. Three days after leaving the fleet, they entered a river, the waters of which being turbid and the bed very deep, Anastasius declared that it must be the object of their search. Iberville was still doubtful; but having painfully worked their way up the stream for eight or ten days, they arrived at a village of the Bayagoula Indians, who showed them great kindness, and informed them that they were actually on the Mississippi. These Indians also showed Iberville a prayer-book, in which was written the name of one of La Salle's companions, and gave him a letter from the Chevalier de Tonti, dated at the village of the Quinipissas, on the 20th of April, 1685. In this letter Tonti informed La Salle, that he had descended the stream with twenty Canadians and thirty savages, in order to rejoin his old commander, and expressed his sorrow that this hope had been frustrated. The letter, of course, had been carefully preserved by the Indians for fourteen years. It was now March, 1699, a date which deserves to be remembered as that of the first discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi from the sea, an event hardly less important than the first descent of the river by La Salle, seventeen years before.

The party continued their exploration of the stream as far up as the mouth of Red river, where they turned about and

floated down the current again to bayou Manchac. Here Iberville and Bienville separated, the latter continuing to descend the river to its opening into the Gulf, while the former entered the bayou, and passing through lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain, arrived at a bay which he called St. Louis, and thence returned to the fleet. Bienville arrived a few days after him.

Having now acquired a sufficient knowledge of the localities, it appears strange that Iberville did not choose a site for the new settlement somewhere on the fertile banks of the Mississippi, at least as high up as the spot where New Orleans was founded more than twenty years afterwards. Convenience of intercourse with the shipping, to which they looked for receiving supplies from France and the West Indies, was the chief reason for the unfortunate choice of a position on the sandy and barren shore and islands of the Gulf, a locality to which much of the subsequent distress of the colony is to be attributed. The long and tortuous course of the Mississippi through the flat and swampy country below New Orleans must necessarily render the ascent of the stream difficult and tedious for ships. Most of the emigrants thought not at all of agriculture, but only of mining and trade with the Indians, so that a ready access of vessels with supplies was essential for their subsistence. Others did not expect to labor at all for themselves, but to live on the bounty of the government, which was liberally dispensed under the form of high salaries to the chief officers of the establishment; and these persons preferred a position that would enable them to communicate most easily with France.

After holding a council, it was determined to establish the chief settlement at the eastern extremity of Biloxi bay, about the middle of the southern coast of what is now the State of Mississippi. We quote the description that Du Pratz gives of this place, as it appeared to him when he arrived there, about eighteen years after the colony was founded.

“I never could guess the reason why the principal settlement was made at this place, nor why the capital should be built at it; as nothing could be more repugnant to good sense. Vessels were not able to come within four leagues of it; and, what was worse, nothing could be brought from them but by changing the boats three several times, from a smaller size to

another still smaller ; after which, they had to go upwards of a hundred paces with small carts through the water to unload the smallest boats. And what ought to have been a still greater discouragement to making a settlement at Biloxi, the land is the most barren of any to be found thereabouts, being nothing but a fine sand as white and shining as snow, on which no kind of green thing can be raised. It was, moreover, extremely incommoded with rats, which swarm there in the sand, and at that time gnawed even the stocks of the guns, the famine being very great.

“ The distress of which I was a witness at Biloxi determined me to make an excursion of a few leagues along the coast, in order to pass some days with a friend, who received me with pleasure. We mounted our horses to visit the interior part of the country, a few leagues from the sea. I found the plains pleasant enough, though less fertile than those along the Mississippi, as they had some resemblance to the neighbouring coast, which supports nothing but pine-trees, that extend a great way, and a few red and white cedars.”

Having established the main body of the emigrants on this promising spot, Iberville caused a fort to be erected for their protection against the Indians, on which he mounted twelve pieces of artillery. He appointed his brother, Sauvolle, to command this fort, and Bienville, the youngest of the three brothers, was to act as his lieutenant. Iberville then returned to France with the ships of war, leaving the other vessels for the service of the colony. One of these was immediately despatched by Sauvolle to St. Domingo, in order to procure a cargo of provisions. Another equally indispensable measure for the safety of the colony was to conciliate the good-will of the neighbouring tribes of Indians ; and for this purpose, Bienville was sent out with a small party, attended by a chief of the Bayagoula nation, that had always manifested great friendship for the French. He first visited the Colapissas, who inhabited the northern bank of lake Pontchartrain, and were numerous enough to send into the field three hundred warriors. They assumed a hostile attitude when Bienville's party first approached, as they had recently been attacked by the Chickasaws, who had in their company two Englishmen from Carolina, and the Colapissas supposed that this party of whites were also English. But the Bayagoula chief undeceived them, and said that these strangers were enemies of the English ; whereupon

they laid down their arms, and received the French with great kindness. After cementing a union with this tribe by the interchange of presents, Bienville visited some smaller tribes on the Pascagoula river, and even penetrated the country of the Mobilians, meeting everywhere with a friendly reception, and arranging terms of future intercourse with the savages.

Early in July, 1699, Sauvolle received an unexpected visit from two French missionaries, Montigny and Davion, who had come from Canada, in the track of La Salle, to teach Christianity to the Oumas tribe, on the banks of the Mississippi. Hearing from the Indians that a new French colony was established on the sea-coast, they descended the river and came to Biloxi. One of them had established his dwelling on a little eminence upon the left bank of the great river, which was called after him Davion's Rock. Fort Adams was afterwards built upon this spot, which is about half-way between St. Francisville and Natchez. Davion labored with great success in his vocation among the savages, baptizing many of them in the rapid waters of the old Meschacébé, as it was then called ; and after his death, his memory was held in so great veneration among them, that Indian mothers brought their infant children to his Rock, in order to draw down upon them the benediction of Heaven.

The great success of the Catholic missionaries among savage tribes is easy to be accounted for ; their doctrine is perhaps the purest form of Christianity which entirely uncivilized men are capable of receiving. The ceremonies and implements of the Romish faith, — the altar, the crucifix, and the rosary, the invocation of saints and the burning of incense, the sign of the cross and the great importance attributed to baptism and extreme unction, — are things addressed to the outward senses, and likely to produce a vivid effect on the simple imaginations of savages ; they may be received with awe, or practised with fervor, long before any glimpse of their symbolical import can reach the ignorant understanding. A faith thus made evident to sense is a kind of natural transition state from gross fetichism to an entirely spiritual religion. The savage will readily give up his amulet, if he can receive a crucifix in its place, which he probably regards with the same feelings ; the brutish rites of idolatry may easily be renounced, if the sign of the cross, and

the imposing ceremonies of baptism in the running stream and of extreme unction, are offered as their substitutes. The visit of the Indian mother with her new-born babe to Davion's Rock is an affecting circumstance ; but performed as a religious rite, and with a view to avert the vengeance of Heaven, it does not say much for the thoroughness of her instruction in the Christian faith. This distinction between the observance of a few forms and a knowledge of the true faith appears simple and obvious enough ; but we fear it is sometimes lost sight of, even by the Protestant missionaries of our own day.

But to return to the history of Louisiana. The English did not disregard the opportunity for further colonization which was afforded by the discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi from the sea. On his return to the lower portion of the river from an expedition to explore some of its bayous, Bienville found there an English man-of-war, of sixteen guns, commanded by Captain Bar, who informed him that he had left another ship of equal force at the mouth of the river, and that the object of the voyage was to take soundings and explore the bed of the stream, in order to ascertain what advantages there were for establishing an English colony on its banks. The worthy captain, moreover, with great simplicity, considering that the party interrogated was French, asked if he was then really on the great river that he was in search of, and which he had been instructed to explore. Bienville gravely answered that he was not, that the Mississippi was much farther to the west, that the place where they then were was a dependence of the Canadian provinces, and that the French had already a fort and many other settlements in its immediate neighbourhood. Captain Bar thanked him for his courtesy in communicating this information, and immediately tacked ship, and made the best of his way down the stream. This is the story told to explain the name of *Détour Anglais*, or English Reach, which is given to a great bend in the river about eighteen miles below New Orleans, the place where the French party encountered the English captain.

While Bienville was giving this remarkable specimen of his adherence to truth, a French engineer who was employed on board the English ship handed to him a memorial, with a request that he would transmit it to the court of France. It

was signed by four hundred Huguenot families, who had taken refuge in Carolina after the revocation of the edict of Nantes. They asked leave of the government to establish themselves in Louisiana, on condition of enjoying while there full liberty of conscience. The Count de Pontchartrain answered them, that the Most Christian king, his master, had not driven the Protestants out of his kingdom in Europe in order that they might form a republic in his American dominions. Never did the spirit of religious intolerance manifest itself more unseasonably, or redound more to the prejudice of the bigot's own interests. Had this modest and affecting request been granted, there can hardly be a doubt that the whole destiny of Louisiana would have been altered, and its early history have exhibited as steady and rapid a growth from its own resources as that which is displayed in the colonial annals of Massachusetts or Pennsylvania. Four hundred families, already inured to hardship, exile, and toil, would have removed to the fertile banks of the Mississippi, with the honest purpose of making a permanent home for themselves and their children. Brought thither without costing a *sous* to the royal treasury, compelled, instead of hunting out illusory indications of gold or silver mines, to devote themselves at once to agriculture, because they could not depend for supplies on the mother country that had already cast them out from her bosom, the earth would have yielded to them her stores in abundance, and the gaunt spectres of penury and famine, which the wealth of all France could not banish without their aid, would never have visited that fair land. Rejecting them, the colony was left to consist of a miserable aggregation of Canadian hunters, vagrant speculators, intent only upon cheating the Indians out of their peltry and upon a wild search for the precious metals, and indolent officeholders who cared for nothing but their salaries. Such was the policy of the *Grand Monarque*. No wonder that his successors were eager to get rid of the province by ceding it to Spain in 1762, and to the United States in 1803 ; for it was never any thing but a drain upon the resources of France from the date of its establishment.

Iberville, who had returned to the colony with a fleet, resolved to anticipate the English in their design of forming a settlement on the banks of the lower Mississippi, and fitted out an exploring party for this purpose in January, 1700.

He took fifty Canadians with him, to go round by the mouth of the river, while Bienville was directed to take the shorter route by the lakes, and obtain guides from the Bayagoula tribe, who could point out to him some spot on the river's banks, the nearest to its mouth, which was not exposed to inundations. They directed him to a strip of land sufficiently elevated for this end, about fifty-four miles from the sea, where he was soon joined by Iberville, who ordered a fort to be built there. About the middle of February, they were agreeably surprised by the appearance of old Tonti among them, the veteran companion of La Salle, who had come down the river with seven men to see what progress the new colony was making. After reposing for some days, the two brothers slowly wended their way up stream with him, and after making some stay with the Bayagoula and Oumas Indians, they came at last to the country of the Natchez. St. Come, a French missionary, had come down from Canada a short time before, and had taken up his abode with this tribe. Here Iberville was so much delighted with the aspect of the country, that he resolved to make one of the chief settlements there ; and selecting for this purpose a fine bluff on the left bank, he traced out a plan for a city and fort, to which he gave the name of Rosalie, in honor of the Countess de Pontchartrain. On the site of Fort Rosalie now stands the city of Natchez. Leaving Bienville to continue his explorations, which he did as far as the country of the Washitas, and even to Natchitoches, Iberville returned again to France to seek further supplies.

The three brothers were now dissatisfied enough with the spot first chosen for the establishment of the colony, and if they could have had their will, they would have removed all to the banks of the Mississippi. But the vanity and egotism of Louis the Fourteenth infected the whole course of his administration ; the home government retained the direction of affairs entirely in its own hands, and would trust nothing to the discretion of the colonial authorities. The king had conceit enough to believe, that his subjects in America had not sufficient judgment to select a proper spot for their own dwellings except under his wise direction. In his letters to the minister, Sauvolle represented in the strongest terms the unfitness of the place for residence ; " I can do nothing here at Biloxi," he wrote, " the environs are so unpromising."

The climate was as little favorable to the colonists as the soil. On this burning sand, even in the month of April, it was so hot, that they could work in the open air only for two hours in the morning, and as much in the evening ; and in winter it was very bleak and cold. The dysentery was also very prevalent among the French, as well as other diseases. The Indian traffic amounted to nothing, for the neighbouring tribes were too poor to keep up a brisk trade. "The more I become acquainted with these savages," said Sauvolle, "the more I see of their misery. If the hope of discovering a mine does not succeed, the court will never be repaid the money which it is necessary to expend here, unless it permits the traffic in beaver-skins to come this way, which will not be ruinous to Canada." But the court thought this measure would ruin the Canadians, and so this most profitable branch of the fur trade continued to have its only outlet by the St. Lawrence. Monopoly was the great feature of the old colonial system, even with respect to the intercourse with each other of different provinces which owed the same allegiance.

"Iberville left for France," says M. Gayarré, "to obtain additional supplies, and confided to Bienville the command of the fort which he had caused to be built on the Mississippi. The progress of the colony threatened to be extremely slow ; the people thought of extending their discoveries only in the hope of finding some mine of gold or silver ; the earth was not cultivated, and it was from St. Domingo that the people received their means of subsistence. Consequently, they were often afflicted by a most dreadful famine ; disease added to their misery ; and their number diminished so rapidly, that in December, 1701, there were hardly a hundred and fifty persons in the province.

"Sauvolle himself could not survive so many misfortunes. He died on the 22d of July, and Bienville succeeded him as governor of the colony. This was its sad situation when Iberville returned with two ships of the line and a brig, which brought troops and a quantity of provisions. According to the king's commands, which he transmitted to his brother, Bienville left twenty men under the orders of Boisbriant at Fort Biloxi, and removed the head-quarters of the colony to the west side of Mobile river, very near where the city of Mobile now stands. Besides this new establishment, they made another on an island not far off, where, at the time of its first discovery, they

had found a great number of human bones, and for this reason had called it Massacre island. This name, which was one of ill omen and not agreeable to the ear, was changed for that of Isle Dauphine. Iberville, seeing that it was necessary to cultivate the ground, if they would prevent the recurrence of a dearth like that which had already afflicted the colony, wrote to the French government asking urgently for laborers. 'Means must be found,' said he, 'for sending laborers to Louisiana, for people who are well off in France do not willingly go thither. Frenchmen are not at all inclined to leave their homes, when they are in easy circumstances there, to remove to so distant a country. The reason why our colonies make so little progress is, that they send thither only beggars who wish to get rich, and who pass their lives there before they are able to undertake any thing, and meanwhile the colony languishes.'" — Vol. I. pp. 74, 75.

Isle Dauphine is one of a line of narrow islands which runs parallel with the coast, and at a short distance from it, along nearly the whole northern shore of the Gulf of Mexico. According to the accounts given of it by Dumont and Du Pratz, the colonists did not gain much by being transported thither from Biloxi. It is very flat, and composed only of sand, which is so fine and white, especially upon the sea-shore, as to be very injurious to the eyes. Upon this parched soil, and under the burning sun of that region, the French succeeded with great difficulty in raising salads and a few other vegetables of trifling nutriment. The cattle that were brought thither suffered greatly for want of sufficient fodder, and the soldiers and other inhabitants lived on fish and rations of salt provisions that were served out to them by the authorities. There had been a tolerably good harbour on the south side of the island ; but this was choked up with sand by a high sea just after the colonists arrived there, so that the settlement was formed at the east end, where vessels were obliged to anchor at two leagues' distance from the shore. The coast of the desert of Sahara would have been as proper a place for the establishment of a European colony. Political reasons probably made the French government adhere so long and obstinately to the settlements near the eastern limits of Louisiana ; the Spaniards had established themselves at Pensacola, and Louis wished to prevent them from spreading farther westward. The only recommendation of Isle Dauphine over other localities on the same

coast was, that fresh water could be had there in abundance, in immediate proximity to the sea.

In 1704, Chateaugné, another brother of Iberville and Bienville, arrived in a ship loaded with provisions, which came very opportunely, as the colonists were again suffering terribly from famine. They had been obliged to wander along the shore for a great distance to pick up shell-fish, and many were saved from perishing only by the aid that was charitably sent them by the governor of Pensacola. The ship also brought seventeen new emigrants, with a great quantity of farming tools, that were much needed ; so it appears that the representations of Iberville had produced some effect.

About this time, also, twenty unmarried women were sent over in one vessel to join the colony, which hitherto had consisted almost entirely of males ; only a few Canadians had brought their wives with them from the north. The minister wrote to Bienville, that these women had been virtuously and piously educated, and that they knew how to work, which would make them very useful to the colony, as they could teach the female Indians how to be good housewives. " In order that no one might be sent who was not acknowledged to be pure and irreproachable in character, his Majesty had commissioned the bishop of Quebec to select them in places that could not be suspected of any licentiousness. You will take care to establish them in as eligible a manner as possible, and to marry them to men who can give them a comfortable livelihood."

M. Gayarré plumes himself very much upon bringing to light this letter, as it serves to refute a tradition, which he admits to be very common, that the ladies first sent over to Louisiana were remarkable for any thing rather than for the purity of their past lives. He forgets to notice a little circumstance which is incautiously divulged by Dumont, that these women, with but one exception, were made to emigrate against their will, and that this brave girl was appropriately called *la demoiselle de bonne volonté*. As soon as they had disembarked, they were all lodged in one house, and a sentinel was placed at the door. No entrance was permitted at improper hours, but during the daytime they received visits, and the eager suitors were permitted to select wives according to their fancies, on the old principle of

"first come, first served." Dumont tells us, that they were all provided for and married without delay, and that the demand much exceeded the supply ; for the last who remained was the means of exciting a very serious quarrel between her two suitors, who were about to settle their respective pretensions by single combat, " although this Helen was any thing rather than beautiful, and had more the air of a soldier of the guard than of a timid female." The commandant interfered, however, and obliged them to end the dispute by drawing lots. " It is certain that if, at this time, there had arrived as many unmarried females as there were soldiers and laborers upon the island, not one of them would have been left without a husband."

This first adventure having succeeded so well, the ministry sent over another supply the next year, consisting of twenty-three. But Dumont writes, that the rage for getting married had now subsided a little, so that the maidens were not incommoded by the number of their suitors. The governor was obliged to exhibit his wares before he could find a market for them ; he sent a number of them in boats to Ship island, old Biloxi, and other stations; where at last they were all happily married. But they were not without their share of this world's troubles, even after they had become established in life. A great dearth was experienced before they had been twelve months in the colony, and Bienville wrote to the home government, that they were again dependent upon the Spaniards, who could furnish them with nothing but Indian corn. " The men who are in Louisiana," he adds, " have become accustomed to this kind of food ; but the women, who are for the most part from Paris, eat it very unwillingly, and scold roundly against the bishop of Quebec, who had given them to understand that they were emigrating to the land of promise." The worthy governor himself did not escape scot-free from these feminine objurgations. M. Gayarré finds a letter written by the superintendent of this cargo of females, in which she complains to the minister, that M. de Boisbriant, recently promoted to the rank of major at Mobile, had intended to marry her, but that Bienville and his brother had prevented him from executing his purpose ; upon which she indignantly remarks, " It is evident that M. de Bienville has not the necessary qualifications for governing a colony."

Though our historian prides himself, as we have seen, on the unspotted character of the early female emigrants to Louisiana, it appears from one letter which he publishes, that the ungrateful colonists would have been better satisfied, if the home government had paid a little more attention to the personal appearance of the women who were sent out to become their wives. Judging from the tone of this document, the ministry must have thought that the only incontrovertible proof of purity of life was the possession of a face and figure which under ordinary circumstances would never encounter any temptation. It was the chief commissary of the colony, Duclos, who wrote to the minister in 1713, complaining about the twelve women that M. de Clérembault had caused to embark at Port Louis, and "who were so homely and ill-shaped, that the inhabitants of this country, especially the Canadians, had very little inclination for them."

"Still," he adds, "two of them are now married; but I have great fears that the others will remain a long time on our hands. It appears to me that in making such a selection, M. de Clérembault ought to have regard rather to the external appearance than to the character of the women. The Canadians, and particularly the *voyageurs*, of whom we have found a great number here, who are all good-looking men, are not very scrupulous as to what the deportment of the women may have been before they take them; and if they had found any who were comely and to their liking, perhaps some of these *voyageurs* would have remained to marry them and establish themselves here. This would have augmented the colony. Instead of this, they have all gone back, saying that they preferred the Indian women, whom many of them have married, especially of the Illinois tribe, by the aid of the Jesuit missionaries there. We shall endeavour, however, to get the others married as soon as possible. If all the *voyageurs* and the *coureurs de bois* could establish themselves here, it would be more suitable to send over unmarried women than men, as the latter are already far more numerous than the former." — Vol. i. pp. 99, 100.

In 1707, the colony suffered the irreparable loss of its founder and indefatigable friend, Iberville, who died at St. Domingo of yellow fever. All the benefits which they had received from him and his family did not prevent a portion of the Louisianians from making the grossest and most unfounded charges against the three brothers, especially against

Bienville, who was unquestionably the most active and useful man among them. There is reason to believe, however, that most of these ingrates were inferior officers in the administration who wanted his place, or who found that his authority and watchfulness operated to check their own habits of license and fraud. A year before, the chief commissary, as he was called, who appears to have been the treasurer and accountant of the colony, and in some sort independent of the governor, wrote to the minister, — “The three brothers, Iberville, Bienville, and Chateaugné, are guilty of all sorts of misdeeds, and are mere thieves and cheats, who are squandering his Majesty’s property.” An ecclesiastic, M. de la Vente, the curate of Mobile, put himself at the head of this discontented faction, and endeavoured to persuade his people that all the misery which they suffered was the governor’s fault, who had not informed the king how necessary it was to send them ships frequently with provisions. Bienville was too high-spirited to defend himself at any length against charges so absurd, and the consequence was, that the home government issued an order superseding him in office, and commanding his successor to investigate the matter of these complaints, and if they were well founded, to arrest him and send him to France as a prisoner. Luckily for the colony, which could ill have spared his services at this time, M. de Muys, the person appointed to succeed him, died on his passage out, and Bienville remained in office.

Famine and internal dissensions were not the only evils under which this unhappy colony suffered ; the great heat of summer and the marshy borders of the rivers generated fevers, which reappeared every year, and made great ravages. Intemperate and inattentive to cleanliness, most of the whites fell an easy prey to the terrible malady which still scourges the low country of Louisiana during the hot months, though the native and acclimated part of the population have ceased to fear it. We are not surprised, therefore, to find, from an official report made to the ministry, that the colonists in 1708 hardly equalled in number those who had accompanied Iberville on his first voyage, though a fresh band of emigrants had joined them nearly every year. According to this report, the whole number in the colony was two hundred and seventy-nine, of whom one hundred and twenty-two were soldiers, sailors, or other persons in the pay of gov-

ernment, and eighty were Indian slaves. There were also about sixty vagrant Canadians, who had established themselves among the Indians on the borders of the Mississippi, and were hardly more civilized than their hosts. The natives who had been reduced to slavery were of little use ; Bienville complains that they followed the example of their indolent masters, and refused to work upon the soil. If coercion was attempted, they fled to the forests, and perished in the attempt to regain their distant homes through the line of the neighbouring tribes, who were at amity with the French. The governor proposed to exchange them for black slaves with the inhabitants of the West Indies. "We will give," he said, "three Indians for two negroes. The Indians when on the islands cannot escape, being expatriated ; and the blacks cannot take to the woods and become bandits in Louisiana, as the savages would kill them." This proposition was examined by the ministry, and rejected, on the ground that the West Indians were not willing to part with their serviceable negroes. The only way to obtain black slaves, they said, who would really be very useful to the colony, was to import them expressly from the Guinea coast, or to purchase them from the importers.

The government was at last convinced, that Bienville had not sufficient means at his command to render Louisiana an important possession for France. The factitious glory and prosperity of the reign of Louis the Fourteenth were now on the wane ; the king himself was on the verge of the tomb, and the energies of the country had been entirely exhausted by his long and, of late, disastrous wars. It was thought best to grant the exclusive right of trade with Louisiana, with other high privileges, to some wealthy company or individual, who, in return for such advantages, would defray all the expenses of the colony. Antoine Crozat, an opulent merchant, undertook this hazardous speculation, and received the charter in September, 1712. The grant comprised all the territory belonging to France, from the Carolinas to Mexico, comprising Isle Dauphine, and all the country watered by the Mississippi, the Ohio (then called the Wabash), and the Missouri.

"The territory thus vaguely described was to bear the name of Louisiana, and to be a dependence of the government of New France. The commercial monopoly granted to Crozat was at-

tended by many other privileges, among which was a right to possess and work all the mines of precious metals on condition of reserving one fourth of their products for the king, and to send a ship once a year to Guinea to obtain negroes. All these privileges were to continue for fifteen years, on condition that Crozat should fulfil certain obligations that were imposed on him, and particularly that he should send from France every year two ships loaded with a certain number of emigrants." — Vol. 1. p. 95.

The government undertook to pay an annual sum of fifty thousand livres for the salaries of the officers of the king in Louisiana for nine years, after which the whole expense of maintaining the garrison and the administration was to devolve on Crozat. Lamothe Cadillac was made governor in place of Bienville, who was allowed, however, to retain an inferior office. His services were admitted to be of great value in maintaining amicable relations with the Indian tribes, over whom he had acquired vast influence by his generosity and scrupulous adherence to his word, as well as by the firm and equitable manner in which he acted when he was chosen arbitrator to settle disputes among them. Above all, he conciliated their esteem by punishing with great severity any of his own countrymen who wronged them, and compelling full compensation to be made to them for every injury. The new governor had sense enough to leave this department of the administration entirely in his hands, and to devote himself entirely to the search for mines, and to writing long despatches to the government containing the most doleful accounts of the poverty of the country and the weakness of the settlements. At this time, there were only about three hundred whites in Louisiana, more than half of whom were soldiers and other persons in the pay of the king.

Crozat hoped to open an overland intercourse with the Spaniards of New Mexico, and thus to find a market for the products of Louisiana. The jealous disposition and strict revenue laws of the Spanish government formed an insurmountable obstacle to any traffic by sea between the two colonies ; but it was thought that a contraband trade through the interior would be connived at by the authorities. For this purpose, and to prevent the Spaniards from establishing themselves at Natchitoches, an officer named St. Denis was sent from Louisiana in 1714, attended by a small party of

Indians and Canadians, with instructions to form a settlement at Natchitoches, and then to find his way through the wilderness to the Spanish towns on the Rio Bravo. He executed this hazardous commission with great bravery and perseverance, though the expedition had not the desired result. After establishing a small post at the appointed spot on the Red river, he took with him a select party of twelve Canadians and a few Indians, and struck off boldly to the westward, into a wild and unknown region. After travelling twenty days, he arrived at a village of the Assinai, near the place where La Salle had been murdered, twenty-seven years before. Here he obtained guides, who conducted him to Presidio del Norte, the nearest settlement of the Spaniards on the Rio Bravo. Its governor, Don Pedro de Villescas, received him with great courtesy, and St. Denis announced that the object of his expedition was to make arrangements for commercial intercourse between the two colonies, which would be equally advantageous to the French and the Spaniards. As Don Pedro had no power to conclude such an arrangement, St. Denis was obliged to push on to Caouis, a hundred and eighty miles farther, where a superior officer resided. Here he was detained on various pretexts till the beginning of 1715, when the governor said that he must send him under an escort to the viceroy at Mexico. Accordingly, having directed his companions to return to Natchitoches, St. Denis set forward to the capital.

On his arrival, after a fatiguing journey of three months, he was immediately thrown into prison by the viceroy, and languished there for many weeks. He was then released, at the solicitation of some French officers in the Mexican service, and the viceroy, appreciating his merits, sought to induce him to remain there, and accept office under the Spaniards. He refused, and the viceroy then presented him with one of the finest horses in his stables, furnished him with money, and sent him back to Presidio del Norte. Here he was fortunate enough to render some service to his old friend Don Pedro, by negotiating a peace for him with a neighbouring tribe of Indians, and then remained some time under his hospitable roof. During this time, he fell in love with the daughter of his host, and having obtained her consent and that of her father, they were married. After tarrying some months longer with his wife, he bethought himself that it was

necessary to render an account of the expedition with which he had been charged, and accordingly set out upon his return, and arrived at Mobile in August, 1716, accompanied by the uncle of his wife. His report was, that he had failed to make a commercial arrangement, but had effected a matrimonial alliance between the French and Spaniards.

Notwithstanding this failure, Crozat recommended that the attempt should be renewed, and three Canadians were accordingly furnished with merchandise, and sent off by way of the Red river towards the province of New Leon. They were soon overtaken by the indefatigable St. Denis, who accompanied them as far as the village of the Assiniais. There they stopped awhile to refresh themselves, while he, being in haste to see his wife, who had remained with her father, pushed forward with a portion of the goods to Presidio del Norte. The three Canadians soon followed him, but ascertained on their arrival, that his wares had been confiscated, and that he had gone to the city of Mexico in the hope of obtaining their restoration. Fearing a like seizure of their own goods, they hurriedly retraced their steps, and returned in safety to Mobile, after a fatiguing and perilous journey. Some months afterwards, St. Denis returned also. On his arrival in Mexico, he found a new viceroy in office, who received him with the usual measure of hospitality in the Spanish colonies towards foreigners, by throwing him again into prison. After a time, his wife's relations obtained his release, and a restoration of his goods, which he sold at a very high price. Unluckily, however, an unfaithful agent cheated him out of the whole proceeds of the sale, and discouraged by his continued misfortunes, St. Denis returned to Louisiana with a report that it was idle to think of maintaining any traffic with the Spaniards.

Crozat himself had already arrived at the same conclusion. During the absence of this land expedition, he had resolved to risk an adventure by sea, hoping that the Spaniards on the coast would be more favorably inclined to trade than those in the interior. He sent a ship, therefore, with a rich cargo to Vera Cruz, having selected the goods with a particular reference to the Mexican market ; but the viceroy, deaf to all representations, would not allow the vessel even to enter the port, and it was obliged to return to Louisiana, where the merchandise was all wasted or spoiled. Disheartened

by these losses, by the enormous expenses of the colony, and by the pitiful returns from the meagre traffic with the Indians, Crozat resolved to return to the government its burdensome grant, and to renounce the profitless ambition of owning a vast province in the New World.

The surrender of his charter was accepted at a council of the ministry held in August, 1717, and it was then determined that the management of Louisiana was too considerable a charge for a private individual, that the king could not undertake it, seeing that his majesty could not enter into all the commercial details that were necessary, and consequently that the best course was to create a company with sufficient capital to carry on the enterprise. The monopoly of Crozat had continued for five years, during which time the colony had made no progress in commerce or agriculture, though its population had somewhat increased, as he had faithfully executed his contract by sending fresh bands of emigrants thither every year. Including the soldiers, the French in Louisiana now numbered seven hundred souls.

The new company formed to take charge of the province was the main feature in the famous Mississippi scheme of the notorious John Law. This daring adventurer in finance, a Scotchman by birth, had cunning enough to gain the favor of the regent Duke of Orleans, by whom the affairs of France were then mismanaged, and under his auspices to carry into effect one of the most stupendous schemes of fraud that the world has ever witnessed. The kingdom itself was to be renovated through a tide of wealth which should flow in upon it from all quarters, under the wonder-working agency of a new bank, with immense capital, that had already been established with Law at the head of it, and of this new commercial association, which was to draw immeasurable riches from the hitherto feeble and sickly colony of Louisiana. It is difficult to tell whether this impudent projector was the dupe of his own schemes, or whether he had his eyes open all the time, and really meant to gain wealth and power for himself by duping and ruining a whole nation. The former is the more probable hypothesis, as it seems incredible that a conscious swindler should have recommended his project with so much zeal and earnestness as to deceive alike the prince, the ministry, the merchants, and the people. A factitious appearance of wealth was easily created at the

outset by issuing a vast quantity of certificates of stock, which through the eagerness of the infatuated purchasers rose to an enormous value, and by sending forth bank-notes without stint to supply the frantic demand for means to purchase. Fictitious values being thus manufactured to an immense extent, every thing wore for a time the aspect of the greatest prosperity ; money was abundant, prices rose, the value of the stock was enhanced from day to day. Any question about the basis on which this vast paper fabric rested was met by a reference to the undiscovered mines, the boundless unsettled lands, and the yet unexplored commercial facilities of Louisiana. The excited imaginations of the French supplied all the rest ; impudence could not frame fictions that the public credulity would not tolerate.

Law ruined half France, but the consequences of his scheme were beneficial to Louisiana. The new company, of which he was the chief director, in return for the monopoly of trade with the province, and for its right to all the land on which it should cause settlements to be established, was bound to transport to Louisiana, during the term of its charter, at least six thousand whites, and three thousand negro slaves. The bubble burst and the company was destroyed before this plan was wholly carried into effect, but not till its lavish expenditures and the abundant means it had provided for bringing emigrants and slaves into the colony had given strength and confidence to the settlers, and enabled them to rely in some measure on their own efforts. As one of their first measures, the directors reinstated Bienville in office, and he determined at once to seek a proper location on the banks of the Mississippi for the chief settlement. He selected the spot where New Orleans now stands, and sent fifty laborers to clear the ground, though the city was not properly founded and made the seat of government for some years afterwards. The company made extensive grants of lands, on condition that the proprietors should send over a sufficient number of emigrants to form the necessary establishments for cultivating the soil. Law himself took a grant of four square leagues on the Arkansas, and as he could not find Frenchmen enough who were willing to emigrate, he sent thither two hundred Germans, who were soon followed by five hundred slaves from the African coast. A company, among whom were some ministers of the crown, accepted a

large tract upon the Yazoo river, and Hubert, the chief commissary of the colony, with some merchants at St. Malo, undertook to settle an extensive district near Natchez. The emigrants arrived before sufficient preparations could be made for them, so that many perished from famine and the peculiar diseases of the country ; but enough remained, with the aid of the negroes, to clear large tracts of ground, on which tobacco, rice, and indigo began to be cultivated, and Louisiana at last had promise of better days.

Among the Germans who came to occupy Law's grant was a woman who had excited considerable attention in Europe, and of whom we find occasional mention in the memoirs of those times.

"It was said that she was the wife of the Czarowitz Alexis, the son of Peter the Great, and it is certain that she bore a striking resemblance to this princess. The report was, that in order to escape her husband's bad treatment, as he beat her cruelly, she had recourse to a feigned death, and came out of the tomb to take refuge in a distant country. This woman married in Louisiana the Chevalier d'Aubant, who had seen the princess at St. Petersburg, and thought he recognized her under the *incognita* which she had taken, and which she apparently wished to preserve. After a long residence in Louisiana, she followed her husband to Paris and to Isle Bourbon, whither he was sent with the rank of major. Becoming a widow in 1754, she returned to Paris with a daughter whom she had had by her marriage. She died there in great poverty in 1771." — Vol. I. p. 182.

In June, 1722, news was brought to Louisiana, that the royal bank had failed, that Law himself, preserved with difficulty from the popular fury, had become a fugitive and an exile, while consternation and bankruptcy pervaded France. The shock was fatal, also, to the private fortunes of many individuals in the colony, but did not materially impede the general prosperity of the settlements. They had now fairly taken root in the soil, the few years during which they had been under the management of the company having greatly augmented their numbers and resources. Great fears were entertained lest they should be entirely forgotten, amid the general distress that agitated the mother country ; but the India Company was still in being, though with miserably crippled means and credit, and the directors were able even in this disastrous year to send some feeble aid to their prov-

ince in America. The condition of the emigrants, who had most recently arrived to colonize the extensive land grants made by the company, was the most pitiable. The bankruptcy of the great proprietors who had transported them to this country left them suddenly without tools, habitations, or present means of subsistence. Most of Law's German colonists abandoned his lands on the Arkansas, and came in a body to New Orleans, seeking to find passage to France, whence they might regain their native land. Unable or unwilling to assist them to return, the colonial government offered them a tract of land on both sides of the river, about twenty miles from New Orleans, which they accepted, and applied themselves with characteristic patience and frugality to cultivating the soil on their own account. The Chevalier d'Arensbourg, a Swedish officer, was made commandant of this new post. This was the origin of the establishment on that part of the river which is yet known by the name of the *Côte des Allemands*, or German Shore ; its industrious inhabitants long supplied the market of New Orleans with every species of vegetables.

The history of Louisiana from this time forward is complicated with Indian wars and European diplomacy, and cannot be made intelligible here without far exceeding our limits. We have followed the accounts of its infancy and its slow and feeble growth with much interest, because they are so unlike the annals of English colonization in America, and show the curious contrast between the characters and actions of the Gauls and the Anglo-Saxons when they attempt to subdue the wilderness, and extend the borders of civilization. We have said that M. Gayarré's work can hardly be called a history ; but it furnishes much useful material for the future historian, and we cannot close without expressing our gratitude to him for the zeal and diligence with which he has illustrated the annals of his native State. The two volumes already published bring down the history of the province only to the year 1770 ; but a continuation is promised which will extend to the present time.